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Character Discoveries

A Chance for Everybody

Here is a new variety of Discoveries which everybody can write.

Our country is rich in lives which are essentially great, though oftentimes obscure; lives of remarkable achievement of one kind and another; of silent heroism; of self-sacrifice; of self-denial toward great ends; of the overcoming of awful obstacles; of notable self-development. The paragraphs on this page and the next give an idea of the character of these new Discoveries which readers are asked to contribute. As a guaranty of good faith the name and address of the person described must be given with each paragraph submitted. Should we desire in any instance to print the name of the person described, permission will be duly asked.

Payment will be made for available paragraphs, on acceptance. Writers must not forget to place their own names and addresses, as well as those of the characters described, upon each paragraph or sheet. Write the words "Discoveries II" on the corner of the envelope, and please do not include regular Discoveries or other business.

Heroic Lives

✪ The story of Mrs. —— shows what can be accomplished by a woman who never had normal sight and who has been actually blind for nearly thirty years. Even as a child she could not see clearly, and between twenty-five and thirty she lost her sight entirely. She lived on a farm, where, in addition to her share of the general housework, she did all the baking for a large family, and made butter for home consumption and for market. The churning was done by machinery, and she managed the engine herself. When she was about fifty she became a widow and gave up the farm. She then built a small house for her own use. She planned it herself, and it is very pleasant and convenient. She has no children of her own, so a few years ago she adopted a little girl whom she is bringing up to be as capable a housewife as she is herself. She has always been much interested in church work, going to the meetings of the sewing circle, where she does knitting or coarse sewing. She has several times been sent to conventions as a delegate of some religious society, and she enjoys traveling extremely. She has recently returned from the Woman's Temperance Convention in Edinburgh, which she attended as the representative of her home society. M. G. R.

✪ When the old "what's the use?" temptation rises before me, I think of a certain man of my acquaintance, the obstacles which confronted him, and the position which he occupies now. At sixty years of age he was without capital and without health, which latter he had sacrificed in the service of his country between 1861 and 1865. Today, at eighty, or thereabouts, he is a millionaire. How did he do it? By sheer ability, will power, persistence. He was an inventor. He set about getting capital interested, and he got it, a little at a time. By shrewd management he built up his business from small beginnings. He took the best of care of his health, and as his business thrived so did his health. He is a very modest man, else this paragraph would tell where his great manufacturing plant is situated. Would it pay to "Oslerize" the middle-aged and elderly? B. U. T.

✪ One of the pluckiest struggles I ever knew, personally, was that of a boy who was born with deformed feet and no money to pay orthopedic surgeons—if indeed there was such a thing as orthopedic surgery when he was young. With his own hands, and according to ideas of his own, he molded his feet, year after year, into such condition that he could wear regular shoes, and walk with scarcely a limp. He went to work in a factory, but soon graduated to larger things, and won fame and fortune. J. T.

✪ Youth and age are chiefly mental attitudes, according to a lively little woman of over seventy years who spent last summer at one of the New England

beaches. To prove her assertion, and also because she thoroughly enjoyed the exercise, she swam a mile every day, no matter what the temperature of the water. This daily swim in summer has been her habit for years. B. W. T.

✪ If you are so unwise as to contract smallpox, or scarlet fever, or diphtheria in New York City; if you live in a fashionable apartment hotel, or in a tenement house; if you can afford many trained nurses or are so poor that even a doctor is an extravagance, your fate is the same. In its own ambulance, the New York Board of Health sends its own doctor for you, and carries you to its big pesthouse, the largest hospital for contagious diseases in the country. Here you are a prisoner; no inmate of the Tombs was ever more cut off from family and friends than are you. Should you die, the board of health seals you in an iron casket and buries you within twenty-four hours. But you don't die.

The hospital chaplain keeps you alive.

When doctors and nurses have done their scientific best for you, a white-gowned, militant, smiling-eyed figure bends over your bed. He does not say that he is the chaplain. He does not talk religion. He only smiles into your sick eyes and tells you that he is going to make you get well, and that he is at your service at any hour of the day or night. If you are afraid of losing your "job," the chaplain goes to your employer and holds it for you. If you are in danger of being dispossessed, he pays your rent from his all-too-meager salary. If your baby is born in the pest house he christens it, and if it dies he reads the burial service, which no minister could be persuaded to, because of contagion dangers. If your disease is smallpox, even, the chaplain still stays at your side through the lonely watches of the night, comforting, unafraid. During a year he carries thousands of books to and fro from his library to the wards. He averages three hundred visits to patients a week.

He is an untiring, valiant epitome of practical religion, obscure, but illuminating—the chaplain of New York's Hospital for Contagious Diseases. L. E. D.

✪ She is the blind Jenny Wren of the slums, this slip of a girl, nineteen years old, who practically supports her mother and a little brother and sister by making dolls' clothes.

She was only five years old when the light went out, and she had to lay down her dolls, never to see their loved faces again, but her fingers began at once learning exquisite skill. It does not matter that the top floor back apartment in which this little blind girl lives is shut in and darkened by the high buildings which tower above it on either side. Surrounded by dolls of varying sizes and masses of soft, colored worsteds, baby blue and pink and scarlet and white, she works in the dark crocheting diminutive sacks and dresses and caps and suits for dolls, and even the dolls themselves, for the New York department stores. The little sister is always at her side, after school hours, to help in the selection of colors; and the invalid mother winds worsted for the blind worker when she isn't busy with the housework. The girl has more orders for her dolls' clothes than she can fill, and at such good prices that she is able to contribute most materially toward the support of the family.

This year she has decided to enlarge her usefulness, to go down the long tenement stairs, and as far as a nearby settlement, where she will teach children who have their sight the skill of hand which she, sightless, has discovered. L. D.

✪ Mrs. Blank is the bravest, most wonderful woman I have ever known. She is now over sixty. At the age of fourteen she became totally and hopelessly blind. During her early forties she fell, injuring her back, and was confined to her bed for more than ten years. Fortunately she was able to sit bolstered up in bed for a part of each day. She wrote, with the aid of a grooved board, and did a great deal of knitting and sewing. She made underclothes, pillow covers, bags, and the like, threading her own needles and cutting out the various articles by patterns just as if she could see. Lately her back has improved so that she can sit in a chair all day and even move about her room a little. So she has started a gift shop, where antiques, lace, hand-painted china, embroideries, aprons, hand-made lingerie and

place and Christmas cards are sold. She also takes orders for sandwiches, cake, salad, and candy for lunches and teas. Of course she has to have an assistant to arrange and display her wares, and to read the price tags. But all the business arrangements she keeps in her own hands. She interviews consignors, talks with special customers, and discusses special orders. All the finances, the advertising, and the selection of stock she attends to personally. M. G. R.

✪ "You can do a heap more'n you think if you'll just keep a-doin'." Thus a plain seamstress of my acquaintance sums her philosophy of living. Going out to sew regularly at fifty cents a day is none so easy a way to provide comfort, food, and medicine for a husband, dying slowly of tuberculosis. Notwithstanding, she did it. Further, when the end came she comforted her sore heart by giving her dead, in her own phrase, "a real beautiful funeral." Inside a year from her day of release a brother died, leaving seven young children, a helpless wife, and nothing else. "Why, of course, I took keer of 'em," says the seamstress. "You see, there was nobody else that had any call to do it." She had lived in rented rooms; with a family to look out for she became a householder. The house she bought on long time, had a garden back, and a tiny side yard. She got much more than half the family living from the garden, setting the children at work there before and after school. The side yard, given over to chickens, was an actual source of revenue—scant, of course, but important in the owner's scale of things.

The children helped in every way they could. As fast as they came to working age, she let them get about it. She kept their mother with them until the older ones were well married. All are married, and in the flock there is not a black sheep. Now that the home is paid for—it cost $2,500—the mistress of it feels herself a capitalist. She sews at home, but bears a conscience notwithstanding. Witness, she makes a frock with quantities of frills and flourishes for anywhere from two to four dollars. Conscientious customers occasionally make her take more, even though she is still in bondage to patterns. She cannot escape this, having no originality nor any artistic knack. She is painstakingly neat in everything, the kindest soul alive, and as cheery as she is kind. All her genius, indeed, is for believing the best of everybody, doing the best for everybody—and keeping on "a-doin'." M. W.

A Soup and Salad Garden

By Florence Sping

MY MODEST soup and salad garden can be attained by almost anyone who can spare a few feet of land with a sunny exposure. If adjoining and in the shelter of the house, so much the better. It can be managed by the mistress herself, and will yield her as much in the way of health and benefit to tired nerves as it will furnish added variety and luxury to the bill of fare and beauty to the appearance of the table.

If you can have a man for half a day, just at first, it will be a great help, but you can do even the digging yourself, and if unaccustomed muscles ache, it will make your bed feel so much the better at night.

Dig over a strip of land in the sunniest place you can spare. Let us assume that it is next the house and twelve feet long by four wide. Half this length will be vastly better than no garden at all!